

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1, 2, 8, 9 and 30, 31, 34-36. Please cancel claims 29 and 33. The claims are as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

providing a substrate;

forming an electrically conductive layer on a top surface of said substrate;

patterning said conductive layer into a plurality of wire bond pads spaced apart, said top surface of said substrate exposed between said wire bond pads, top surfaces of said wire bond pads being top surfaces of said conductive layer and being parallel to said top surface of said substrate;

after said patterning, forming a dielectric layer directly on said top surface of said substrate in spaces between adjacent wire bond pads and directly on said top surfaces of said wire bond pads; and

after said forming said dielectric layer, completely removing said dielectric layer from said top surfaces of said conductive layer of said wire bond pads, top surfaces of said dielectric layer in said spaces coplanar with said top surfaces of said wire bond pads.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further including:

recessing said dielectric layer in said spaces below said top surfaces of said wire bond pads, an upper region of sidewalls of said bond pads exposed in said spaces and a lower region of said sidewalls of said bond pads covered by said dielectric layer.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further including:

recessing said wire bond pads below said top surfaces of said dielectric layer in said spaces after said completely removing said dielectric layer from said top surfaces of said wire bond pads.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including:

forming a final dielectric layer on said substrate, said dielectric layer and said wire bond pads; and

forming openings in said final dielectric layer to expose less than an entire portion of each said wire bond pad in said openings.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein said final dielectric layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of polyimide and photo-sensitive polyimide.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said dielectric layer comprises a layer of silicon oxide, a layer of silicon nitride or combinations thereof.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said wire bond pads comprise aluminum, aluminum copper alloy, copper, gold, tantalum, tantalum nitride or combinations thereof.

8. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

(a) providing a substrate;

(b) forming a passivation layer on a top surface of said substrate;

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(c) forming an electrically conductive layer on a top surface of said passivation layer;

(d) patterning said conductive layer into a plurality of wire bond pads spaced apart, top surfaces of said wire bond pads coplanar, ~~bottom surfaces of said wire bond~~, after said patterning, a top surface of said conductive layer and top surfaces of said bond pads being a same surface, said top surfaces of said bond pads being parallel to a top surface of said substrate; and

after step (d), (e) forming a dielectric layer directly on said top surface of said passivation layer in spaces between adjacent wire bond pads and directly on said top surfaces of said wire bond pads, said dielectric layer filling said spaces; and

after step (e), (f) completely removing said dielectric layer from said top surface of said wire bond pads, said top surface of said dielectric layer in said spaces coplanar with said top surfaces of said wire bond pads.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8, further including:

recessing said dielectric layer in said spaces below said top surface of said wire bond pads, an upper region of sidewalls of said bond pads exposed in said spaces and a lower region of said sidewalls of said bond pads covered by said dielectric layer.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, further including:

recessing said wire bond pads below said top surface of said dielectric layer after said completely removing said dielectric layer from said top surfaces of said wire bond pads.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, further including:

forming an final dielectric layer on said substrate; and

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forming openings in said final dielectric layer to expose less than an entire portion of each said wire bond pad in said openings.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein said final dielectric layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of polyimide and photo-sensitive polyimide.

13. (Original) The method of claim 8, further including:

forming an final dielectric layer on said substrate; and
forming openings in said final dielectric layer to expose less than an entire portion of each said wire bond pad in said openings.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said final dielectric layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of polyimide and photo-sensitive polyimide.

15. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said dielectric layer comprises a layer of silicon oxide, a layer of silicon nitride or combinations thereof.

16. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein said wire bond pads comprise aluminum, aluminum copper alloy, copper, gold, tantalum, tantalum nitride or combinations thereof.

17. (Original) The method of claim 8:

further including between steps (b) and (c), forming via openings in said passivation layer exposing regions of electrically conductive wires in said substrate;

wherein step (d) fills said via openings with said electrically conductive layer; and

wherein step (d) includes forming each wire bond pad over at least one said via opening.

18. (Withdrawn) A structure, comprising:

a substrate;

a plurality of wire bond pads on a top surface of said substrate, said wire bond pads spaced apart; and

a dielectric layer on said top surface of said substrate in spaces between adjacent wire bond pads, top surfaces of said dielectric layer in said spaces about coplanar with coplanar top surfaces of said wire bond pads.

19. (Withdrawn) The structure of claim 18, further including:

a final dielectric layer on said substrate, said dielectric layer and said wire bond pads; and

openings in said final dielectric layer exposing less than an entire portion of each said wire bond pads in said openings.

20. (Withdrawn) The structure of claim 19, wherein said final dielectric layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of polyimide and photo-sensitive polyimide.

21. (Withdrawn) The structure of claim 18, wherein said dielectric layer comprises a layer of silicon oxide, a layer of silicon nitride or combinations thereof.

22. (Withdrawn) The structure of claim 18, wherein said wire bond pads comprise aluminum, aluminum copper alloy, copper, gold, tantalum, tantalum nitride or combinations thereof.

23. (Withdrawn) A structure, comprising:

- a substrate;

- a plurality of wire bond pads on a top surface of said substrate, said wire bond pads spaced apart; and

- a dielectric layer on said top surface of said substrate in spaces between adjacent wire bond pads, top surfaces of said wire bond pads recessed below top surfaces of said dielectric layer in said spaces.

25. (Withdrawn) The structure of claim 23, further including:

- an final dielectric layer on said substrate, said dielectric layer and said wire bond pads;

and

- openings in said final dielectric layer exposing less than an entire portion of each said wire bond pad in said openings.

25. (Withdrawn) The structure of claim 24, wherein said final dielectric layer comprises a material selected from the group consisting of polyimide and photo-sensitive polyimide.

26. (Withdrawn) The structure of claim 24, wherein at least one of said openings extends across two or more adjacent wire bond pads.

27. (Withdrawn) The structure of claim 23, wherein said dielectric layer comprises a layer of silicon oxide, a layer of silicon nitride or combinations thereof.

28. (Withdrawn) The structure of claim 23, wherein said wire bond pads comprise aluminum, aluminum copper alloy, copper, gold, tantalum, tantalum nitride or combinations thereof.

29 (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said dielectric layer comprises a first ~~conformal~~ dielectric layer over a ~~second~~ conformal dielectric layer, a top surface of said first dielectric layer surrounding a top surface of said second dielectric layer, said top surfaces of said first and second dielectric layers being coplanar and parallel to said top surface of said substrate.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 30, wherein said top surfaces of both said first and second ~~conformal~~ dielectric layers are coplanar with said top surfaces of said wire bond pads.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said removing said dielectric layer includes:

performing a chemical-mechanical polishing.

33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8, wherein said dielectric layer comprises a first ~~conformal~~ dielectric layer over a second conformal dielectric layer, a top surface of said first dielectric layer surrounding a top surface of said second dielectric layer, said top surfaces of said first and second dielectric layers being coplanar and parallel to said top surface of said substrate.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[33]]~~ 34, wherein said top surfaces of both said first and second ~~conformal~~ dielectric layers are coplanar with said top surfaces of said wire bond pads.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 8, wherein step (e) includes:

depositing said dielectric layer on top of said ~~polarity~~ plurality of wire bond pads, said dielectric layer filling said spaces between said adjacent wire bond pads; and

planarizing said one or more dielectric layers in order to coplanarize said top surface of dielectric layer and said top surfaces of said wire bond pads.